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Technical cooperation programme in Haiti

Report by the Secretary-General

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I. Introduction

1. At its fifty-second session, the General Assembly, in its resolution 52/138 of 12 December 1997, welcomed the fact that the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights had prepared a technical cooperation programme aimed at strengthening Haiti's institutional capacity in the field of human rights and requested the Secretary-General to submit to it at its fifty-third session a report on the implementation of that programme.

2. At its fifty-fourth session, the Commission on Human Rights, taking account of the report on the situation of human rights in Haiti submitted to the General Assembly by the independent expert of the Commission on Human Rights, Mr. Adama Dieng (A/52/499), and forwarded to the Commission, adopted resolution 1998/58, in which it encouraged the political leaders and representatives of Haitian civil society to pursue a dialogue whereby agreement may be rapidly reached and the deadlock created with regard to the appointment of a prime minister may thereby be overcome.

3. The Commission on Human Rights noted with gratitude the report of the independent expert, welcomed the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the programme of technical cooperation in Haiti (A/52/515), which the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights was conducting for the purpose of strengthening institutional capacity in that field and especially in the areas of legislative reform, training of justice administration personnel and human rights education, and requested the Secretary-General to submit a further report on the implementation of the programme to the Commission at its fifty-fifth session.

4. The present report contains information on the implementation of the human rights technical cooperation programme, in accordance with the above-mentioned resolutions. It supplements the report submitted by the independent expert on the development of the human rights situation in Haiti.

II. Mandate and activities

5. The programme of technical cooperation to strengthen the capacities of the political and parapolitical structures in the field of human rights was prepared by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in close cooperation with the Government of Haiti and other parties, including the International Civilian Mission in Haiti (MICIVIH) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The programme aims at strengthening institutional capacity in the field of human rights, in particular in the areas of legislative reform, training of justice administration personnel and human rights education.

6. Specifically, the programme includes two human rights training seminars for human rights associations and local representatives. It also provides for assistance in the reform of the criminal legislation.

7. The timing of the programme's implementation helped to consolidate cooperation between other agencies or groups within the United Nations system, such as UNDP's governance assistance, as well as the many activities of MICIVIH. In this connection, during the preparation of its own activities, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights participated in the activities organized by UNDP and MICIVIH.

8. While the first part of the programme was implemented by the Office of the High Commissioner itself, in considering the implementation of the second part of the programme, due note had to be taken of the decision of the General Assembly, to renew the mandate of the International Civilian Mission to Haiti (resolution 51/196 B of 31 July 1997). In view of the increased involvement of MICIVIH in training activities, as well as its experience in assisting in the area of administration of justice, the Office of the High Commissioner, in agreement with MICIVIH, decided to transfer to the latter the implementation of the remaining activities of the programme of technical cooperation.

III. Conclusions

9. A number of United Nations bodies are involved in technical cooperation projects for the promotion of human rights in Haiti. One of these is MICIVIH, whose activities include training in and monitoring observance of human rights. UNDP, which is working closely with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and his Mission, is concerned with the strengthening of national capacities, particularly in the prison and judicial areas, and is promoting coordinated efforts on the part of the United Nations system as a whole. The High Commissioner has supported the National Commission of Truth and Justice and, in cooperation with UNDP and MICIVIH, has provided training in human rights at the grass-roots level (civic education and training of civil society).

10. The High Commissioner's programme complements the activities of the various United Nations agencies and programmes in Haiti and forms part of overall United Nations action in support of government efforts aimed at restoration of the rule of law, reconstruction and development. UNDP and MICIVIH are very much involved in these areas and the renewal of the mandate of MICIVIH has provided an element of continuity to its programme and enhanced further the possibilities for cooperation among the agencies and programmes of the United Nations system. For that reason, the High Commissioner for Human Rights found that, in order to ensure cost-effectiveness, complementarity and coordination, it was more appropriate to transfer the implementation of the technical cooperation programme to MICIVIH.